

ARLINGTON VILLAGE SHOPPING CENTER
Columbia Pike between S. Barton Street and S. Cleveland Street
Arlington
Virginia

HABS VA-1443
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
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ARLINGTON VILLAGE SHOPPING CENTER

HABS No. VA-1443

Location: Arlington Village Shopping Center is located on Columbia Pike between S. Barton and S. Cleveland streets, near the Arlington Village garden apartment complex, in the Columbia Heights neighborhood of Arlington County, Virginia.

The coordinates for the Arlington Village Shopping Center are 38.862925N, 77.084475W; these were obtained using Google Earth in August 2010 and, it is assumed, using NAD 1983. There is no restriction on the release of the locational data to the public.

Description: The Arlington Village Shopping Center has Colonial-Revival architectural details like those of the apartment complex. Also like the apartments, the shopping center is a low-scale building. It is only one-story in height on the Columbia Pike (north) elevation while a change in grade exposes the basement level on the rear (south). The walls of the shopping center are faced with brick laid in 6:1 American bond and the varied roofline features flat roofs and hipped pavilions. The storefronts have single-leaf doors and projecting windows. Parking is available on the north and south sides of the center.

Date: 1939. The shopping center was designed and built as part of the real estate development project, Arlington Village, a garden apartment and shopping center that followed the earlier Colonial Village complex constructed on Wilson Boulevard. Both were planned by Gustave Ring, who retained the architect Harvey Warwick, and both were financed through the Federal Housing Administration (FHA).

History: During the 1930s a steady influx of people moved to Washington, D.C., and environs as part of the burgeoning federal government, working in New Deal programs and later in defense related industries in preparation for war. Arlington County was no exception. In this decade some 40 percent of Arlingtonians would be employed in public service; many were commuters. As a result, residential and commercial construction projects abounded, especially in the suburbs and included a myriad of apartment complexes and what would become the neighborhood shopping center. The shopping center could be an independent venture, located near a residential community, or be part of the planned development. Such duality of purpose was encouraged by the Federal Housing Administration, the agency insuring many of the apartment buildings and complexes. Unlike a downtown Main Street, the neighborhood shopping centers

clustered between seven to twenty tenants in one structure and offered off-street parking.¹

Automobile culture defined the design for the shopping centers, assuring the presence of a parking forecourt that occupied a significant portion of the lot with one or more rows of diagonal spaces. The low-scale shopping centers were generally one story in height. The individual retail stores were contiguous to one another, each fronting on the parking lot. All of the stores had an entrance accessed directly from the lot.²

Following Arthur B. Heaton's (1930) *Park and Shop* on Connecticut Avenue were another twenty-five or so neighborhood shopping centers erected throughout the D.C. suburbs up until the United States' entry into the Second World War in 1941. The innovative *Park and Shop* served as the model for these shopping centers, both in D.C. and throughout the country as a whole, as the type emerged during the 1930s. At least eleven neighborhood shopping centers of this genre were constructed in Arlington County before the war. In fact, by 1941, neighborhood shopping centers appeared on almost every major thoroughfare in the county. There were four on North Glebe Road, including the Glebe Center (HABS No. VA-1436), plus three on Columbia Pike, including Arlington Village, and two on Wilson Boulevard, one of which was Colonial Village (HABS No. VA-1444).³

Sources: This summary is drawn from survey work completed by Laura Trieschmann, EHT Traceries, and the Arlington County Historic Preservation Office, as well as a site visit in December 2010 with the HABS Photographer, James Rosenthal.

Historian: Virginia B. Price, 2011.

¹ See Richard Longstreth, "The Neighborhood Shopping Center in Washington, D.C., 1930-41," *Journal of the Society for Architectural Historians* 51 (March 1992): 5-34; Laura Trieschmann and Carrie Albee, "Glebe Center," Nomination July 2003, National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, who cite Carl B. Rose, Jr., *Arlington County Virginia: A History* (Baltimore: Port City Press, Inc., 1976), 247-48. See also, www.arlingtonva.us/deaprtments/CPHD, accessed April 2011.

² Longstreth, 11.

³ Sara Amy Leach, "Mihran Mesrobian's Suburban Virginia Garden Apartments and Shopping Centers," Paper presented at Beyond the Mall, Washington, D.C., December 1994; Trieschmann and Albee, sec. 8, 6-8; Longstreth, 17, 33 (appendix).